

NIH POLICY MANUAL

1340 - NIH OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT

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1. **Explanation of Material Transmitted:** This chapter is being revised to reflect organizational changes in the Office of Research Services, Division of Safety.
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A. Purpose:

This chapter outlines the scope, objectives, and responsibilities of employees for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Occupational Safety and Health Management Program. It represents the NIH commitment to actively promote a comprehensive and effective Occupational Safety and Health Program and provides the foundation for the development and maintenance of the various program components.

B. Policy:

The objective of the Program is to assign responsibility to support the development, implementation, maintenance, and improvement of a comprehensive Occupational Safety and Health Program that reflects the NIH policy to:

Provide the highest practical degree of safety and health for employees in all activities of the NIH;

Minimize losses in property damage and human resources due to accident, injury, or illness; and

Comply with Public Law 91-596 (The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970), Executive Order 12196, and other regulations, standards, and guidelines governing the occupational safety and health of HHS employees.

C. Scope:

The objectives and responsibilities set forth in this manual are applicable to all NIH employees and are directed toward providing a comprehensive and effective Occupational Safety and Health Program. Institute, Center, and Division (ICD) Directors and Supervisors will actively support the Occupational Safety and Health Programs within their respective areas of responsibility and comply with the specified directives and responsibilities. NIH employees will comply with applicable regulations and guidelines, perform their duties in the safest possible manner, and report hazards, accidents, injuries, and illnesses to the appropriate NIH authorities.

D. References:

1. Executive Order 12196 of February 26, 1980, Occupational Safety and Health Programs for Federal Employees
2. Public Law 91-596, Williams-Steiger Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, Federal Agency Safety Programs and Responsibilities
3. Title 10 CFR Part 21, Reporting of Defects and Noncompliance; Section 21.21, Notification of failure to comply or existence of a defect and Section 21.61, Failure to notify; Nuclear Regulatory Commission
4. Title 29 CFR Subpart G, Part 1910.96, Ionizing Radiation; Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Department of Labor
5. Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1960, Basic Program Element for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs and Related Matters; Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Department of Labor
6. HHS Safety Management Manual
7. The National Institutes of Health Radiation Safety Guide. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; Public Health Service; National Institutes of Health. Prepared by the Radiation Safety Branch, Division of Safety, July 1988

E. Responsibilities:

The Office of Research Services (ORS), through the Division of Safety (DS), has overall responsibility for Occupational Safety and Health at NIH.

The promotion of safety and health policies, practices, and procedures is the responsibility of each member of the NIH Community. Employees are expected to

perform their work in a safe manner and to ensure that they do not place themselves, co-workers, visitors, or support services personnel at risk of injury or illness due to unsafe or unhealthful conditions, actions or infractions. When operating a government or public vehicle, employees are expected to wear seatbelts and obey traffic regulations. When representing the NIH on official business, employees should ensure that their contributions exhibit health and safety concerns.

1. Director, NIH:

a. Through the ORS, DS, provides executive leadership in the development, promulgation and implementation of occupational safety and health policies, standards, and procedures applicable to the NIH.

b. Supports a staff necessary to effectively administer a comprehensive occupational safety and health program for NIH.

2. NIH Safety Committees: (See Appendices 1-3 for charters for the 1) Occupational Safety and Health Committee, 2) Biosafety Committee, and 3) Radiation Safety Committee, at the National Institutes of Health, approved by the Director, NIH, on December 2, 1983.)

a. Assist the Director, NIH, and the Division of Safety in providing oversight required for compliance with applicable safety and health laws and regulations.

b. Assist with the organization and administration of the NIH Occupational Safety and Health Program.

c. Provide technical advice, assistance, and management-level support; recommend and set policies regarding occupational health and safety as authorized by the NIH Director.

d. Provide a means by which employees can use their knowledge of workplace operations to assist management in the improvement of policies, conditions, and practices.

3. Office of Research Services, Division of Safety:

a. Serves as the operational component in developing and implementing NIH-wide safety and health programs through surveillance, consultation, training, and education.

b. Provides administrative management for the comprehensive Occupational Safety and Health Program in compliance with NIH policy and applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

c. Prepares and coordinates the NIH position on proposed legislation and regulations pertaining to safety and industrial hygiene, engineering,

fire safety, environmental hazards control, occupational safety and health, education, training, promotion, etc. that are applicable to the NIH.

d. Monitors, investigates, prepares reports and maintains records of NIH work-related injuries and illnesses. Develops and implements methods to prevent these work-related losses. Conduct and/or assists in the conduct of investigations of hazardous conditions.

e. Performs workplace reviews as are considered appropriate to evaluate compliance with occupational safety and health policies and procedures.

f. Provides technical assistance to NIH employees at all levels of responsibility on matters pertaining to the Occupational Safety and Health Program. Assesses the need for and develops training programs to promote occupational safety and health.

4. Supervisors: (all levels throughout NIH)

a. Ensure and promote safety in the work area under their jurisdiction.

b. Comply with and enforce all applicable occupational safety and health standards, rules, regulations and orders by competent authority pertaining to the activities under their jurisdiction.

c. Ensure that their employees are instructed and/or trained in safe practices and methods of job performance as such pertain to their assignment. Ensure that all visitors and support services personnel are appropriately informed about the existence of hazards present and special precautions required to prevent adverse exposure to these hazards. Acquire the knowledge and information needed to recognize and control hazardous conditions in the workplace. Select and employ standard operating procedures that reduce the potential for injury or illness to the lowest practicable level.

d. Ensure that employees performing official duties and who become ill or are injured on the job have access to appropriate first aid and/or medical attention.

e. Investigate and report each accident and/or injury in accordance with established procedures. Initiate, to the limit of their authority and capability, such actions necessary to correct unsafe or unhealthful working conditions determined to exist and promptly advise appropriate management when such conditions require corrective actions beyond their jurisdiction.

f. Review work practices to ensure compliance with such standards,

codes, regulations, rules, and orders identified by occupational safety and health personnel as being applicable to the work area concerned.

g. Obtain assistance from the appropriate occupational safety and health personnel on the interpretation and application of specific standards, codes, regulations, or rules.

h. Ensure that employees under their supervision are aware of their responsibilities and follow the appropriate procedures for conducting their work safely.

5. Employees:

a. Comply with all occupational safety and health standards, rules, regulations, orders, and safe operating procedures applicable to the NIH.

b. Promptly advise the supervisor regarding all work related accidents resulting in personal injury, illness, and/or property damage.

c. Promptly report to the supervisor or appropriate occupational safety and health personnel or committee any unsafe or unhealthful conditions in the work environment.

F. Reporting Occupational Safety and Health Concerns:

1. Employees can report what appears to be a legitimate concern for their occupational safety and health without any form of reprisal.
2. Employees may request an inspection of their workplace by giving notice of alleged unsafe or unhealthful conditions directly to the Occupational Safety and Health Branch, Division of Safety.
3. NIH employees should report any unsafe or unhealthful condition to their Supervisor and/or the Division of Safety. Reports involving physical, chemical, or biological hazards should be reported to the Occupational Safety and Health Branch. Reports involving radiation hazards should be reported to the Radiation Safety Branch (see the NIH Telephone Directory for information). Employees will be notified by the supervisor or Division of Safety personnel of the actions taken in response to their report of unsafe or unhealthful conditions.
4. All reports of job-related accidents, personal injury, or illnesses are initiated through the Occupational Medical Service (OMS), Division of Safety, when the injured party presents to the OMS. The OMS will ensure that appropriate accident report forms are completed, filed, and appropriately distributed.
5. Employees may appeal decisions relative to alleged unsafe and unhealthful conditions to the Health and Human Services (HHS) designated Safety and Health Official or applicable agencies outside the HHS (Department of Labor,

Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Occupational Safety and Health Administration).

G. Additional Information:

For further information on this manual chapter, contact the Technical Assistance Section, Occupational Safety and Health Branch, Division of Safety, Office of Research Services on 496-2346.

H. Records Retention and Disposal:

For this chapter, records are retained and disposed of under the authority of NIH Manual [1743](#) "Keeping and Destroying Records," Appendix 1, "NIH Records Control Schedule," Items 1300 B and 2300-792.

Appendix 1. Charter for NIH Occupational Safety and Health Committee :

The NIH Occupational Safety and Health Committee provides recommendations for Safety policy to the Safety and Health Council for approval by the Director, NIH, or designee, in matters pertaining to occupational health, accident control and fire prevention and serves as an advisory body to the Division of Safety, ORS. Committee functions include those designated in the NIH Guidelines for the Laboratory Use of Chemical Carcinogens.

Duties of the Committee:

1. Recommends policies regarding occupational health, accident control, and fire prevention to the Safety and Health Council.
2. Provides technical advice, assistance, and management-level support to the Director, Division of Safety, in matters regarding occupational health, accident control, and fire prevention.
3. Identifies substantive biomedical research areas and institutional support programs where occupational health, safety, and fire hazards may exist.
4. Encourages the development of and maintains liaison with the Safety and Health Committees of the ICDs.
5. Monitors and reviews, as the Committee deems appropriate: reports of inspections; safety and health training programs; plans for controlling and abating hazards; medical surveillance initiatives; reports of occupationally-acquired illnesses and injuries; responses to reports of hazardous conditions; safety and health program deficiencies; and complaints regarding the safety and health programs.
6. Performs committee responsibilities specified in the NIH Guidelines for the Laboratory Use of Chemical Carcinogens.
7. Establishes working groups and appoints ad hoc members to the Committee, as

the Committee deems it necessary, to effectively carry out its duties.

Membership and Organization of the Committee: The Committee is composed of ten members appointed by the Director, NIH, or designee. Members are nominated by the ICD Directors. All members should be recognized as persons of good judgement and should represent the diversity of occupational areas which reflect the employee make-up and accident experience of the NIH. The discipline of chemistry, toxicology, and medicine must be represented on the Committee. Five members are selected from current chairpersons of established ICD Safety and Health Committees. The Chief, Occupational Safety and Health Branch, DS, ORS, serves as Executive Secretary. The Chief, Emergency Management Branch, DS, ORS, and the Medical Director, Occupational Medical Service, DS, ORS, serve as permanent, non-voting, resource members of the Committee. The Director, NIH, or designee, selects the chairperson from among the Committee membership. The chairperson serves a two-year term. The members serve overlapping terms of three years duration. The chairperson and members may be reappointed for additional terms.

Appendix 2. Charter for NIH Biosafety Committee :

The NIH Biosafety Committee provides recommendations for safety policy to the Safety and Health Council for approval by the Director, NIH, or designee, in matters pertaining to the control of hazards associated with the intramural use of microbiological agents and their vectors and serves as an advisory body to the Occupational Safety and Health Branch, DS, ORS. Committee functions include those designated for the Institutional Biosafety Committee in the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules.

Duties of the Committee:

1. Recommends policies regarding biosafety to the Safety and Health Council.
2. Provides technical advice, assistance, and management-level support to the Occupational Safety and Health Branch, DS, ORS, and to the NIH Biosafety Officer in matters regarding biosafety.
3. Identifies substantive biomedical research areas where biohazards may exist.
4. Recommends procedures for approving operations involving microbiological agents and their vectors that require maximum containment for biosafety and for such agents which, in the judgement of the Committee, may constitute unique or serious hazards.
5. Performs function of an Institutional Biosafety Committee as specified in the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules.
6. Reviews accidents resulting in personnel exposures to hazardous microorganisms or widespread area contamination and reports of non-

compliance with established national and NIH policies regarding the safe conduct of research involving hazardous microorganisms.

7. Establishes working groups and appoints ad hoc members to the Committee, as the Committee deems it necessary, to effectively carry out its duties.

Membership and Organization of the Committee: The Committee is composed of ten members appointed by the Director, NIH, or designee. Six members are nominated by the Board of Scientific Directors from among the intramural research community; five being scientists representing a diversity of disciplines relevant to biomedical research, infectious diseases, and recombinant DNA technology and one being a non-doctoral employee from a biomedical research laboratory. The NIH Biosafety Officer is a member and serves as the Executive Secretary. Two members are selected from the general public who are not affiliated with the NIH apart from their membership on the Committee. One member who is nominated by the Director, Division of Engineering Services, shall have expertise pertaining to design, operational capability, and maintenance of NIH research facilities. The Director, NIH, or designee selects The chairperson from among the Committee membership. The chairperson serves a two-year term. The members serve overlapping terms of three years duration. The chairperson and members may be reappointed for additional terms.

Appendix 3. Charter for NIH Radiation Safety Committee :

The Radiation Safety Committee oversees the NIH Radiation Safety Program to ensure the safe use of radioactive materials and source of radiation throughout NIH and those NIH-occupied buildings included within the NIH Radiation Safety Program and provides recommendations for radiation safety policy to the Safety and Health Council for approval by the Director, NIH, or designee. The Radioactive Drug Research Committee is a subcommittee of the NIH Radiation Safety Committee.

Duties of the Committee:

1. Ensures the safe use of all radioactive materials and sources of radiation throughout NIH and those NIH-occupied buildings included within the NIH Radiation Safety Program, for the Director, NIH.
2. Assigns to the NIH Radiation Safety Officer responsibility for implementing the Radiation Safety Program and enforcing applicable Federal regulations and NIH radiation safety policies and procedures to ensure the radiation safety of persons and protection of the environment.
3. Provide technical advice, assistance, and management-level support to the Radiation Safety Officer in implementing the Radiation Safety and the NIH program for maintaining radiation exposures to employees, patients, and research subjects as low as reasonably achievable (ALARA).
4. Reviews the Radiation Safety Program at least annually to determine that all

activities involving radioactive materials and sources of radiation are being conducted safely in accordance with applicable Federal regulations and NIH radiation safety policies.

5. Reviews the qualifications of licensed physicians and grants approval for the use of radioactive materials in human subjects.
6. Performs functions of the Radioactive Drug Research Committee in accordance with applicable regulations of the Food and Drug Administration, PHS, DHHS.
7. Reviews all requests to use radioactive materials in human subjects and protocols for such use and grants approval for specific uses.
8. The Chairperson of the Radiation Safety Committee acts for the Director, NIH in all matters relating to federal or state radioactive material or radiation source licensing.
9. Recommends new radiation safety policies to the Safety and Health Council for approval by the Director, NIH, or designee.
10. Establishes working groups and appoints ad hoc members to the Committee, as the Committee deems necessary.

Membership and Organization of the Committee: The Committee is comprised of ten members - the NIH Radiation Safety Officer and nine members appointed by the Director, NIH, or designee. Membership shall include representation of the various types of users of radioactive materials and radiation sources at NIH, a representative of the nursing staff, and representative of NIH management. At least four of the appointed members shall be physicians with training and experience in the use of radioactive materials and radiation sources, and should include the disciplines of hematology, radiology, pathology, and internal medicine. These four members will be selected from candidates nominated by the Medical Board. The other three members will be selected from candidates nominated by the Board of Scientific Directors, and should include a radiation physicist with training and experience in the use of radioactive materials and radiation sources in biomedical research.

The chairperson is named by the Director, NIH, or designee, from among the Committee membership and shall serve a two-year term. The members serve three-year terms and shall have staggered appointments so as to provide for some continuity of membership. The chairperson and members may be reappointed for additional terms. The Radiation Safety Officer shall serve as the Executive Secretary of the Committee and shall maintain the official Committee files. A quorum consisting of five Committee members shall be required before any official action may be taken by the Committee.

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